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Boston Landmarks Commission

Meeting No. 74, January 2, 1980

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bianchi
Blank
Harrell, P.
Hynes
Rothman
Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT

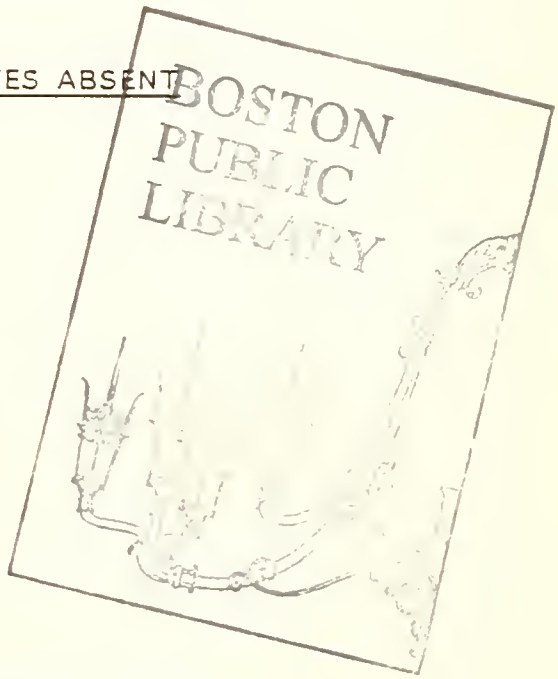
Overbea

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Aldrich
Brickus
Cooke
Davis
Lang
Zellner

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Goody



STAFF PRESENT

Burke
Daniel
Gannon
Harrell, J.
McDonough
Myers
Smith

The special meeting of the Boston Landmarks Commission to discuss a compromise proposal on 53 State Street was called to order by Chairwoman Pauline Chase Harrell at 5:00 p.m.

An introductory statement was given by BRA Director, Robert J. Ryan, in which he summarized the series of meetings and deliberations that had taken place between the owners and developers of 53 State Street, the Preservation Alliance, the BRA and the BLC, which resulted in a compromise proposal: "That will enable us to retain the most important parts of the building; retain the present scale of building heights on State Street;" and preserve the facades of State and Kilby Street. "The interior of 53 State Street will be retained including its distinctive main staircase." He referred to Boston in 1980: "As a city which has gained national and

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international recognition for the skill it has shown in combining the old with the new." He added that the new structure will reflect Boston's future; will produce about $3 million annually in new taxes to the city, which is about five times the tax revenue now produced; construction will create 2,000 jobs for the building trades, and the tower will generate 5,000 permanent jobs. Mr. Ryan commended the owners, Olympia & York, the Preservation Alliance, the BLC and the staff of the BRA for their energy and efforts in arriving at this compromise. He then introduced Mr. Richard Manning of WZMH-Habib, Inc., the architectural firm which has been working on the project.

Mr. Manning showed the working model of the proposed 53 State Street building and tower and described the proposal. There will be an atrium space between the new and old structures, and the plans are to retain the broad marble staircase in the atrium space. He added that the tower materials have not been determined as yet.

After Mr. Manning had completed his presentation, a question and answer period ensued. Commissioners were concerned about the use of tower materials; the effects on the existing structure, and how far the tower will be set back -- particularly from the Kilby Street facade. Mr. Manning stated that some of the areas require further study. Commissioner Zellner inquired about the interior of the State Street Bank. Mr. Fine replied that the developer does not own the interior; that State Street Bank, when they sold the building to the current owners, retained the right of ownership and the right of removal over all of the interior finishes. Olympia & York are negotiating with the State Street Bank, and the State Street Bank is considering remaining as a tenant. They seem agreeable to the idea of reusing interior elements, according to Mr. Fine.

Commissioner Henry Wood, Chairman of the Designations Committee, stated that he had taken part in most of the discussions with representatives of the owners and their architect; several changes have been made to their original proposal as a result of these discussions, and he is comfortable with the end result.

The Chairwoman declared a 5-minute recess at 5:25 p.m. to allow the Commissioners time to read and digest the Standards and Criteria for 53 State Street (revised 1/2/80) included in the agenda package distributed at today's meeting. Meeting resumed at 5:30 p.m. to review the proposed revisions of the Standards and Criteria.

Henry Wood summarized the "most important points" included in the revisions:

(10.1.2) Basically what is being designated is the exterior facade along State and Kilby Streets and such portion of the volume or mass as is necessary for the visual or structural support of those facades. Balance of the building is not designated as a Landmark; however, preservation and restoration of the interior grand marble stairway, the interior stairway at the primary Kilby Street entrance, and the banking hall of the State Street Bank is encouraged.

Other points are primarily involved in terms of saving and restoring the major facades. Brown granite will be retained on Congress Street and carried around for at least the first full bay of the building depth. Map attached to the standards and criteria distributed today shows portions which are allowed to be demolished and the areas which are to be preserved. Henry Wood added that most of the revisions are compromise solutions which have been worked out with the developer over the past three weeks.

In reply to Chairwoman Harrell's request for comments, Marcia Myers stated that the Preservation Alliance who, also, had just this afternoon received the revised guidelines, had submitted the following letter, which Ms. Myers read into the record:

"For BLC:

> The Boston Preservation Alliance is discouraged to learn that the Boston Landmarks Commission has proposed revised Standards and Criteria based on the recent proposal of the developer. The Boston Preservation Alliance cannot concur with the Standards and Criteria as written.
>
> Although we have only received these Standards and Criteria late this afternoon, we can say:
>
> 1. The Congress Street end of the building should be retained for its full depth.
>
> 2. The demolition of the substantial portion behind the Kilby facade should not be permitted.
>
> 3. Other interior elements deemed as very important in earlier standards and criteria should be retained. Those include the banking rooms of the State Street Bank, the marble stair and other previously mentioned elements."

Ms. Myers also read a previous letter from the Preservation Alliance to Robert Ryan, BRA Director, as follows:

> " On behalf of the Alliance we would like to express our appreciation for your continuing concern on the issue of 53 State Street. We in no way wish to take a stand against new development, renovations or a combination thereof in Boston. We are encouraged by the progress which Olympia-York has made in the direction of retention of the essence of the building, but feel they have not come far enough. Our continuing concern will be with where this kind of development can best be placed in Boston. Since at this time we do not have full information on their revised plan, we cannot take a position of specific comments in regard to it. If their final scheme includes substantial subtractions from the volume of the ell-shaped portion (at State and Kilby Streets) as shown in their plans at our meeting, Friday, we would still object.

We can state however, that we would endorse any rehabilitation scheme that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation, as applied to National Register properties. A compromise that meets those standards formulated in regard to the Stock Exchange Building would have our agreement and support.

We would like to be kept abreast of how the issue of the tower will be resolved, since the scale and materials have a direct bearing on those parts of the building that are retained. Again, we thank you for your concern on this issue."

MOTION was made by HENRY WOOD to designate the Exchange Building at 53 State Street a Landmark.

This motion was withdrawn, because it was premature, and should follow a motion to substitute the revised guidelines of January 2, 1980 for those submitted in the study report of October 23, 1979.

After discussion and for clarification purposes:

MOTION was made by VIRGINIA ALDRICH, seconded by SUSAN DAVIS, and passed UNANIMOUSLY that the revised Standards and Criteria dated January 2, 1980 for the Exchange Building at 53 State Street be substituted for the Standards and Criteria included in the study report of October 23, 1979.

MOTION was made by HENRY WOOD, seconded by VIRGINIA ALDRICH, and passed UNANIMOUSLY that the Boston Landmarks Commission designate the Exchange Building at 53 State Street a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, such designation includes the general characteristics, specific criteria and boundary description described below:

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPERTY: The Exchange Building is 11 stories in height with a basement. It is built with a pink-toned granite facing on the dressed elevations and a granite foundation.

BOUNDARIES OF THE DESIGNATED PROPERTY: The designation applies to the building located on the property at 53 State Street also known as Assessors Parcel 3870, Ward 3 and recorded in the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Book No. 8598, Page 391. The Landmark designation applies only to the dressed facades of the building on Kilby and State Streets and that portion of the building within a line running in a southerly direction 60 feet along the elevation facing Congress Street, thence easterly parallel to State Street for a distance of 113

feet, thence southerly parallel to Kilby Street for a distance of 118 feet, thence easterly for a distance of 60 feet parallel to State Street as further shown on the attached sketch attached hereto.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS DESIGNATED: None.

GENERAL STANDARDS & CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED: As described in attachments entitled "General Standards and Criteria for Buildings and Structures Designated as Landmarks by the Boston Landmarks Commission" and "Specific Standards and Criteria - the Exchange Block, 53 State Street, Boston", both documents being including in the study report on the subject property dated October 23, 1979, and revised January 2, 1980.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Libby Blank, Lawrence Bianchi, Pauline Harrell, Virginia Aldrich, Romas Brickus, John Cooke, Susan Davis, and Henry Wood.

VOTING IN OPPOSITION: None.

WITHDREW: Thomas Hynes.

(In calling the roll, Ms. Myers had inadvertently called Carl Zellner, Alternate for Martha Rothman. His vote was in opposition. However, since Commissioner Rothman was present, Alternate Zellner's vote was null and void.)

After discussion:

MOTION was made by ROGER LANG, seconded by LAWRENCE BIANCHI, and passed UNANIMOUSLY that the Boston Landmarks Commission state that in its review of the 53 State Street Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, the Commission finds that there is insufficient grounds for designating 10 Congress Street as a Landmark.

VOTING IN FAVOR were Commissioners Blank, Bianchi, Harrell, Aldrich Brickus, Cooke, Rothman, Davis and Wood.

Marcia Myers advised that a form has been prepared by a private group to nominate the Exchange Building to the National Register of Historic Places, and she suggested that the Boston Landmarks Commission vote to support this listing.

MOTION was made by VIRGINIA ALDRICH, seconded by SUSAN DAVIS, and approved UNANIMOUSLY that the Boston Landmarks Commission supports the listing of 53 State Street on the National Register of Historic Places in a form consistent with this Commission's designation of the building as a Landmark and its design guidelines for the building as adopted at the time of designation.

VOTING IN FAVOR were Commissioners Libby Blank, Lawrence Bianchi, Pauline Chase Harrell, Virginia Aldrich, Romas Brickus, John Cooke, Martha Rothman, Susan Davis and Henry Wood.

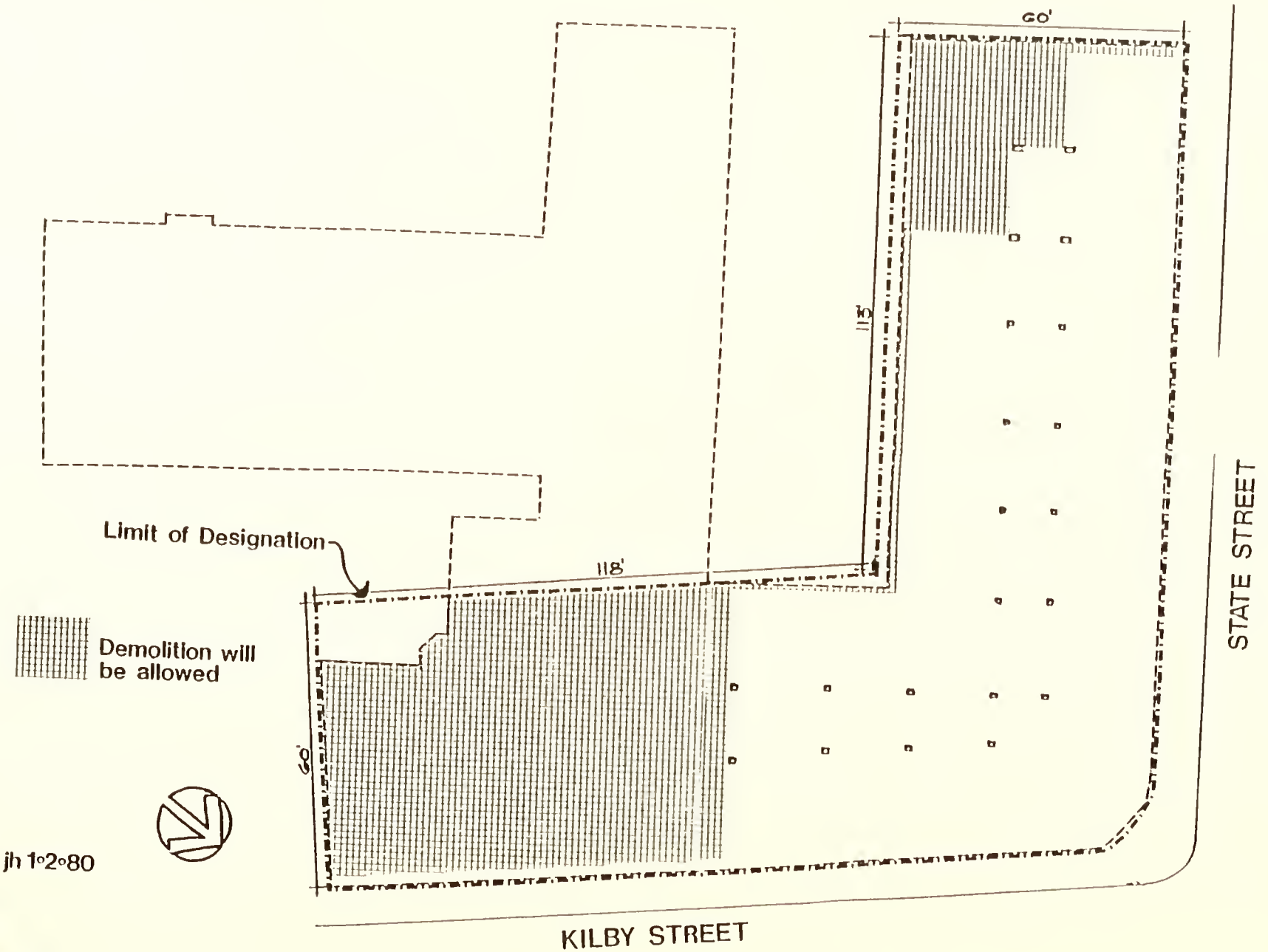
Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Myers

Marcia Myers
Executive Director

The Exchange Building • 53 State Street



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